

ANGLIÆ SPECULUM:

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N^o 8

GLASS

That flatters not;

Presented to a Country Congregation at the late

SOLEMN FAST,

April 24. 1678.

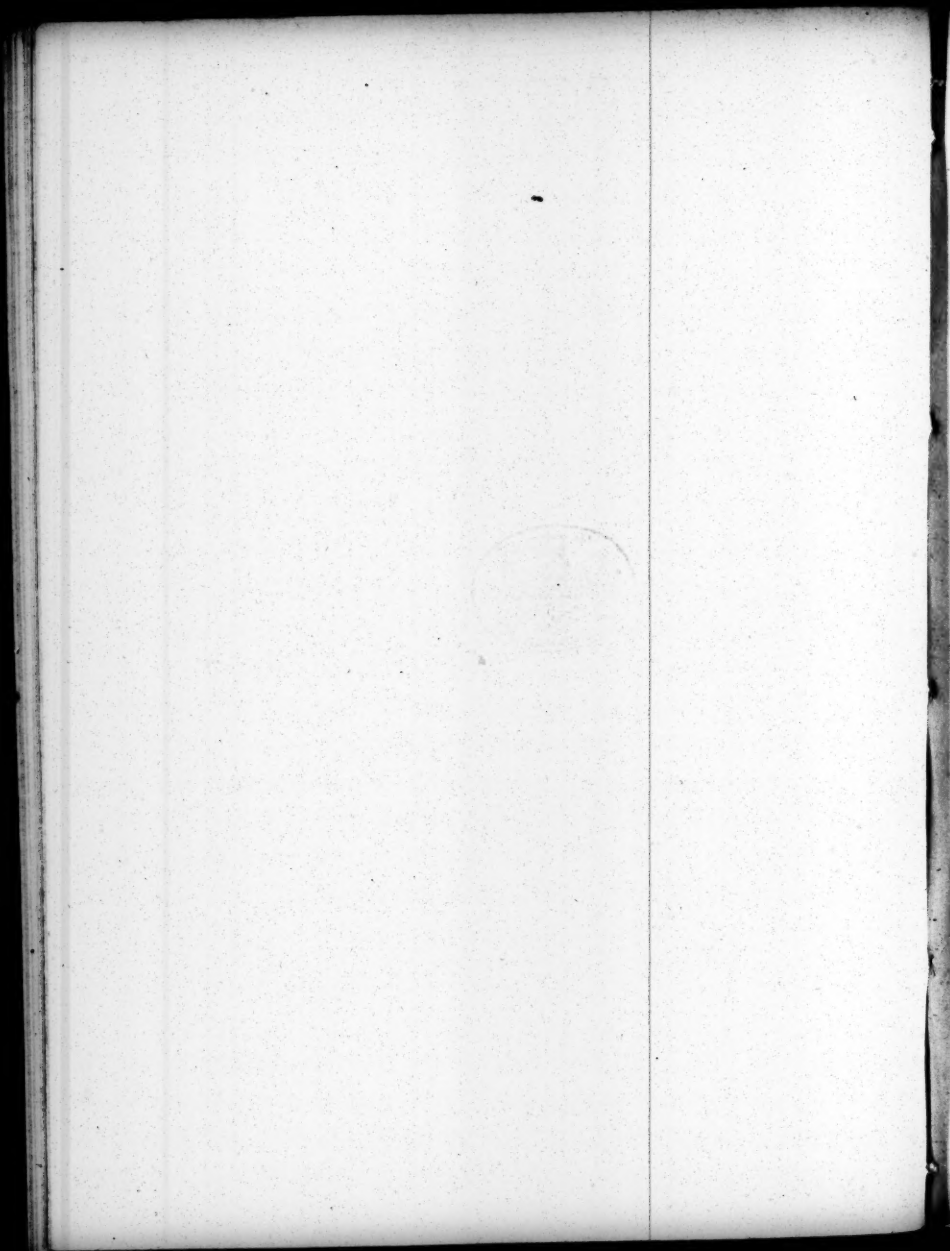
In a PARALLEL between the KINGDOM of
ISRAEL and ENGLAND.

Wherein the whole Nation is desired to behold and
consider, our SIN, and our DANGER.

Dr Simon Patrick
By a dutiful Son of this Church.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Richard Roysson*, Bookfeller to His most Sacred
MAJESTY, MDC LXXVIII. *Ⓐ*



(1)

A

GLASS

That flatters not;

Presented in a

SERMON

At the last Fast.

ISAIAH ~~v~~^l 25. latter end. †

For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still.

WE are assembled here, by His Majesties *Proclamation*, to humble ourselves before Almighty God, for the manifold sins and provocations of this Kingdom, to beg his blessing upon it, and to beseech him to avert his deserved Judgments from it.

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In Order to which you have heard now read (in the first Lesson for Morning Prayer this Day) another *Proclamation* from God himself, the King of Kings, directed particularly unto us his Ministers, by the Mouth of his Prophet, *Isaiah* 58. 1. saying, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and (how my People their Transgression, and the House of Jacob their Sins.* For we cannot be humbled for our Sins, unless we know them; and unless we be sensible also how heynous they are; and how displeasing to our Heavenly Father, who hath already testified, many ways, how much He is offended with us.

Now the best way to understand this, will be to consider, what Sins they were which heretofore were most provoking to Him and destructive to others: causing Him to cast off, even the whole House of *Israel* and *Judah*; his own peculiar People, whom He had separated to Himself from all Nations upon the Face of the Earth. Whose Condition is so like to that of ours here in *England*; that he is a Man of little observation, and of slow conception, who is not able to draw the resemblance. If I should endeavour to express to the life, how God dealt with them, and how they requited Him; and again, how He corrected them for their Ingratitude; you would say, *This is England* under other names; or *Here is Israel* again revived. The same things are acted over again in the World; only the Scene is changed, and new Persons are come upon the Stage.

I know no better way to affect your Hearts and to make you both understand my Text, and the dangerous condition wherein we are; than by presenting

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sending you with some few touches, at least, of a Parallel between them and us.

I.

First then if we consider the Singular Priviledges, they enjoyed above other Nations, the Excellent Laws which God gave them, and the true Religion which was established and for a time flourished among them; you may easily find something to match them here in *England*. Which is a Country, that other People have admir'd more than our selves; for the Excellent Frame of our Government, for the Liberty of its Inhabitants, and especially for the Enjoyment of the Blessed Gospel of Christ in great Purity, Cleerness and Splendor; which hath continued many Years.

II.

And if we consider *Secondly*, what strange deliverances God vouchsafed that People, whom He had made so near to himself; and those both upon the Sea and upon the Land; we are not without some resemblance to them upon that account: having been a People very often saved by the Lord, who hath marvellously preserved us, when we were in great danger of being swallowed up, by several Enemies of our Peace and Happiness. They have been wonderfully defeated in their open Hostilities; and no less miraculously disappointed in their Secret Plots and Conspiracies: Witness, in the Days of our Fathers, the Spanish Invasion, and the Gun-powder Treason, which can scarce be parallel'd in any Story; and the strange Restauration of his present Majesty, to the astonishment and confusion of his sworn, insolent Enemies; of which our own Eyes have been the Witnesses.

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And it were well for us if we could stop here, and be able to carry on this Parallel no further; if we could only recount the great Favours and Kindnesses of God to us, and admire at his unexpected Salvation which He sent us, when, of our selves, we were utterly helpless. But alas! We must confess also in the third place,

III.

That as their Ingratitude to God was exceeding great, and their Rebellion most shameful against him, who had been kind above measure to them: So we have equalled, if not exceeded them in this; being a Nation prodigiously forgetful of his benefits, and that soon let his wonderful works slip quite out of our minds.

As it was said of them (*Psal. cvi. 7.*) that *they provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea*: That is, immediately after God had vouchsafed an extraordinary deliverance to them, from a very fierce Tyrant, they made no other use of it, but to take the Confidence to affront his Goodness: So may it be truly said of us, *At the Restauration of the King and Kingdom, even at the Restauration of the King and Kingdom, we provoked him to Anger against us.* Instantly, I mean, after He had rescued us from a miserable, forlorn and confused condition, from the power of Usurpers as insolent as *Pharaoh*; and had restored us to Peace and Settlement; we betook our selves to our old or worse Wickedness, revolting most perfidiously from all the Vows we were apt to make in the time of our trouble; and behaving our selves so basely and disingenuously towards Him, that it is a wonder he hath indured us thus long, or that we dare

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dare take the confidence to appear before him, and to expect any further favour from Him.

The Description which the Prophet gives in the beginning of this Chapter, of the happy Estate of the *Jews* by the Divine Favour to them, is exceeding beautiful: and He no less lively sets forth their Horrid Ingratitude to their Sovereign Benefactor. Read the *first* and *second* Verses, with this brief Exposition of them, and you will scarce be able to refrain from thinking with your selves (though I should make no comparison) how like are we to them in every particular? He compares them to a *Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill*; which every one easily conceives is a representation of the prosperous estate of the *Jews* in an exceeding rich Country, abounding with all delightful things. This Vineyard He fenced, or hedged in, by the Law (say the *Jews*) whereby He severed them from all other Nations; or by his special Providence, which was their Guard and Defence, securing them from all invasions while they observed his Law. *And He gathered out the Stones thereof* (as Men you know are wont to do, when they have a very choice peice of Ground) that is, cast the Gods of Stone, and all their Worshippers out of the Land of *Canaan*, as He did the Romish Superstition out of this Kingdom. *And He planted it with the choicest Vine*; *Joshua* and the Judges, that is, and a number of holy and gallant Men, came and took root in that Country; as ours also hath produced many choice and admirable persons of all sorts, who were the Glory of their times, in the Age before us. And then it follows, *He built a Tower in the midst of it*, by which we may safely understand the famous.

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famous City *Jerusalem* ; which was in the heart and strongest part of the Country. And *then He made a Winepress*, that is (we may probably conceive) the Sanctuary and the Altar, flowing with the Blood of the Sacrifices, and with their Drink-Offerings, which were poured upon them ; and which He testified his acceptance of, by sending down, at the first erection of it, Fire from Heaven to consume them. And now after all this care He expected some fruit, as the next words tell us ; *and looked that it should bring forth Grapes*. But what did He find, when He came to examine how they had profitted under his Heavenly Culture ? Behold, this Vineyard brought forth nothing but *wild sower Grapes* ; which could not but be infinitely distasteful to him : That is, all manner of Sin and Wickedness abounded among them. This was the effect of all his care and pains ; they lived as if they had been a wild barbarous People, that were under no Laws, no Restraints, no Discipline in the World ; but were left to follow meerly their brutish inclinations.

Shall I give you a Catalogue of those Wicked Fruits, that all his Love and Kindness produced ? And I will trouble you with no more than those which the Prophet mentions in this Chapter ; when he comes to explain and apply this Parable of the Vineyard. And he must wink very hard, who doth not see it to be a Map of those very Crimes, which we have been guilty of in this Kingdom.

I.

First, they were grossly unjust and unmerciful to their Neighbours, *Verse 7. The Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the Men of Judah his*

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his pleasant plant : and he looked for Judgment, but behold Oppression, and for Righteousness, (or Mercy) but behold a Cry. Woeful lamentations, that is, and complaints of many Miserable Wretches, who were undone by the great and powerful, who should rather have protected and relieved them. These were some of the Wild Grapes they brought forth. The very same with those Rapines, and Spoils, and Plunderings, nay Sacriledges, which have been committed among us, (and not yet, it is to be feared, repented of) besides all the violence and cruelty, which is every-where too common ; and the private injuries that we have done one another.

II.

Then *Secondly*, follows their Insatiable Covetousness and greedy desire of Riches, which was the cause of the other ; that which provoked their hungry appetite to devour so many Houses, and swallow up so much Treasure. *Verse 8. Wo to them that joyne House to House, that lay Field to Field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the Earth.* They were so ravenous, that is, as if that fertile Country were made for them alone ; and they would have no body have any share in it but themselves. Such Cormorants, we need not go far to seek in all sorts of Men among us in this sinful Nation.

Then, after a terrible threatening *Verse 9, 10.* against these Crimes (for the Sin of Oppression, denying Men their right, or taking it from them, nay, greediness of wealth, and endless heaping one gainful place upon another, are highly displeasing to the Just and Merciful Lord of the VWorld) there follows in the third place,

III. Their

III.

Their Gluttony, Drunkenness, and riotous Excess. V. 11. *wo unto them that rise up early in the Morning* (a thing very preposterous to begin the Day with a Debauch) *that they may follow strong Drink; that continue till Night* (as if they would never give over as long as they could see) *till wine inflame them.* And you know to what filthy sins such Beasts are wont to be inflamed: nor need I tell you what impure Fires have burnt, nay raged among us; which, Wo be to us, are not yet extinguished.

IV.

How should they? When, as the Prophet proceeds to inform us, these sins were attended among that People, with a hatred of all that was serious; even then when Gods Plagues, the tokens of his heavy displeasure, were remarkable upon them. V. 12. Read it; for it is the very Picture of too many among our selves. *And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts: but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his Hands.* As much as to say (if we put it into our Language) they love nothing but merriment and jollity, feasting and dancing, Balls and Plays, treats and entertainments: but never regard what God is doing in the World, nor mind into how miserable a condition their Country is already reduced by their folly. For, as it follows there, V. 13, 14. *Therefore the People were gone into Captivity, their honourable Men were famished, and their Multitude* (i.e. the vulgar sort) *were dried up with thirst: Hell, or the Grave, enlarged her self, and open-*
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ed her Mouth without measure (just as it did in the late devouring Pestilence, which consumed so many thousands of us) nay, He threatens that *their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoyceth should descend into it.* This madness, that is, will inevitably bring all to an end.

V.

For, *Fifthly*, they devised all ways to be wicked. It was a piece of Art, and Skill, to invent new Modes of Villany; and they took a great deal of pains to destroy themselves and others. V. 18. *wo to them that draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with a Cart-rope.* They were not meerly drawn in (as we say) to sin, by the allurements of pleasure and gain, and such like things; but they drew in themselves, and forced themselves to be wicked; even when there was no inclination, in Nature to it. They studied something out of the common rode of wickedness; and, as if they loved wickedness for it self, they dragg'd and haled some sins into the Nation, to which Men had no mind. They set themselves, as the Scripture speaks, to do wickedly; and set themselves to it with all their might. They made a very laborious business of it; and did violence to themselves and others, to make them monstrously impious. For that seems to be the meaning of *drawing Sin and Iniquity, as with a Cart-rope*: unto which, I doubt, too many have put their hands, and made it their work, in this sinful Kingdom; as formerly in *Israel*.

VI.

And in this lewd course they were so impudent-
ly confident, that they mockt, as the Prophet next
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of all relates, at those who told them they were in any danger of being punished for these impieties. They made themselves pleasant with such Monitors, and laught and jeer'd even at the threatning of Gods Messengers: saying, (*V. 19.*) *Let him make speed, and hasten his work that we may see it: and let the Counsel of the holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it.* Which are words of abuse, uttered by way of taunt and scorn, at those who told them God would be avenged of them: They derided the Prophets, who said God had pronounced a heavy sentence upon such evil-doers; and that a dreadful judgment was coming from the holy One of *Israel*. If He be so angry, said they, why doth He stay so long? let us see what he can do: let him make more haste in his executions, that we may know you to be his Prophets. And do you think there are no such prophane Scoffers among our selves, who go on fearlessly in their sins; and dare the Divine vengeance to do his worst against them? O that we were but thus innocent, as not to come within the reach of this *wo*, which the Prophet denounces to all such contemners of Gods threatnings!

VII.

The ground of all which obdurate wickedness was, that they had utterly confounded all the known notions of good and bad, right and wrong, holy and prophane, pure and unclean. Between which they made no distinction at all; but lookt upon them as Names, which had no real difference. That's the meaning of the 20th. Verse. *wo to them that call evil good,* (it is plainer in the *Hebrew* as you

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you read in the Margin of the Bible,) *that say concerning evil it is good, and concerning good that it is evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter: that is, make no difference between these; but look upon those things which we call Vertues and Vices, as Words and Fancies, there being, in their opinion, no such qualities. Nothing is good but what fits the turn they have to serve, and nothing bad but what crosses it. As much as to say, these Men laboured to dig up, by the very roots, all Principles of Conscience, as a foolish scrupulosity; and to introduce a persuasion that all things are alike lawful in themselves, so that no body need consult any thing else but his own pleasure and safety. Which (it is no Libel to speak it) is the very Character of that prophane, ungodly Crew, which in these later years have sprung up among us in this Kingdom.*

VIII.

And yet these very Men were wonderfully conceited of themselves, and had an high opinion of their own wisdom and skill, in managing affairs: as if business would go on with sport and laughter, and flouting at others. Nay, they were confident they should prosper; without maintaining any of those old thredbare Notions of good and evil. Which seems to be the meaning of the next words, *V. 21. Wo unto them that are wise in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* They will see, that is, e're long, what Idiots they are, that have so little understanding, as not to know the difference between falshood and truth; fraud and upright dealing,

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ing, oppression and mercy, soberness and debauchery, devotion and utter neglect of all the Offices of Religion; which all Mankind have ever thought to be as opposite as light and darkness, sweetness and bitterness. Wo be to them that are thus depraved, and have so perfectly lost all spiritual sense and taste, that they can swallow any thing: and yet fancy themselves very wise and prudent Men, if by any means, though never so vile, they can bring about their ends. Woful at last was the end of these Politicians, who trusted to such weak and rotten Counsels.

IX. X.

Especially since, *Ninthly*, they had no other valour but either that of drinking stoutly; Or, *Tenthly*, that of boldly perverting all publick justice. So the Prophet concludes their abominable Character, *V. 22, 23. Wo unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and Men of strength to mingle strong drink. which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.* They were mighty Men at a Debauch; and resolutely broke the established Orders and Rules of common Right and Equity. For if they were intrusted with the Administration of Justice, they judged the Causes that were brought before them, not according to their merits, but as their hatred, or affection, or hope of gain directed them. Rich and, powerful offenders escaped without any punishment, and the poor innocent could have no redress of the wrongs he suffered by them.

I might tell you also of the *Idolatry* whereby some had corrupted themselves, (as this Prophet complains

plains in the first Chapter) and the foul *Hypocrisie* of others, who still continued true Worshippers: But then I should exceed the limits wherein I promised to contain myself, when I entred upon this Discourse. The intention of which is to set before your Eyes those sins which brought a People, as dear to God as we can fancy our selves, to utter ruine: and to possess you with such a dread of his Almighty displeasure, that you may prepare your selves, by true repentance of your own particular sins, to be humble supplicants to God for the whole Kingdom; which, we have too much reason to think, is defiled, if not with all, yet with most of these woful Crimes.

For certain it is that we are very like them in another regard; from which we may evidently conclude, that our Sins are of as deep a dye as theirs: In those heavy Judgments, I mean, that God hath sent upon us; which have a cause, no doubt, as weighty, and that can be none else but our crying Iniquities. And since God, as you have heard, hath made us so like them in his Benefits, in the enjoyment of which He hath also preserved us, by wonderful Deliverances; and we have made our selves so like them in our Ingratitude, that it is hard to discern the difference between their Character and ours: What marvel is it, if there be a *Fourth* resemblance between us; that is, in our Plagues?

IV. It is said, I remember, in the 28th. of *Deuteronomy* (where *Moses* foretels the Fate of *Israel*, if they sinned against God.) Verse 58, 59. *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this Law that are written in this Book,*

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Book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name THE LORD THY GOD; then the LORD will make thy Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of thy Seed, even great Plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses and of long continuance. Behold now, out of the records which the Prophet Isaiah hath left us, how exactly this prediction of Moses was fulfilled. For they having offended God by those Sins before mentioned, and cast away his Law, and despised his Word; therefore v. 25. was the Anger of the Lord kindled against his people; and he stretched forth his Hand against them, and smote them: So that the Hills did tremble, and their Carcasses were torn in the midst of the Streets: And For all this (saith my Text) his Anger was not turned away; but as the Plagues were great, so they were of long continuance, as Moses had said; for his hand was stretched out still.

When one Judgment was past, then He sent another to succeed it; as you may see if you look forward into the *Ninth* Chapter of this Prophecy, *V. 11, 12.* where the same sad words are repeated again upon this Occasion. They were so vain as to imagine themselves secure (notwithstanding all their Sins) from the Power of the *Syrians*, by the Assistance of *Tiglath Pelesar* the King of *Assur*; who was their Ally, and an Enemy to *Rezin* King of *Syria*. But even these Allies, and Confederates, in whom they confided, at the last turned against them. They from whom they expected Succour and Deliverance, proved their greatest Adversaries. *And so the Syrians before and the Philistines behind* (who always watched Occasions to fall upon the *Israelites*, when they

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they were in distress,) made a prey of them, and devoured them with open mouth: and yet, for all this, his Anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.

He had not yet done with them, because, as it follows *V. 13. The People turned not unto Him that smote them, neither did they seek the Lord of Hosts.* They never heartily acknowledged their faults, nor went about to amend them. And therefore He proceeded to punish all the Senators, and the Prophets, and the leaders of the People, together with their young and valiant Men; nay the Fatherless and Widows and all: because every one was an Hypocrite, and an Evil-doer, and every Mouth spoke Villany (as you may read *V. 14, 15, 16, 27.*) and yet for all this his Anger was not turned away, but his Hand stretched out still.

How should it be expected that He should withdraw his Vengeance when they ceased not to provoke him? For, as it there follows, *wickedness burneth like Fire V. 18.* and so *through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts the Land was darkened V. 19.* Which seems to have been in the Days of *Senacherib King of Assyria*: when *Manasseh was against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasseh*; that is, some of the Kingdom of *Israel* joyned with the Enemy, and others opposed them; they could not agree among themselves, but continued their Divisions till all the ten Tribes were subdued; and then they were all together joyned against *Judah V. 21.* And yet for all this his Anger was not turned away, but his Hand stretched out still.

Were not *Moses* his words strangely fulfilled, that
their

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their *Plagues* should be great, and of long continuance? The Reason was, their Sins continued, the very same Sins for which they had thus smarted, as you read, *Ch. 10. 1, 2, 3.* So that after a *New Visitation* and a *Desolation* which came from far, (*V. 4.*) his *Anger* was not turned away (it is repeated there once more) but his *Hand* was stretched out still. The truth is, it was stretched out so long against them, that they were brought to nothing; *Jerusalem* it self, that Impregnable Fortres, was laid in Ashes, and came down wonderfully, as *Jeremiahs* words are in his *Lamentations 1. 9.* Which sound to me as if he would have us understand, that not one tittle of *Moses* his Prophecy failed; who said that their *Plagues* should be wonderful.

And what difference, I beseech you, is there to be found between us and them, as their case stood in the Days of this Prophet *Isaiah*? His words and those of *Moses* are verified again in this Kingdom; which hath lain under *Plagues*, great *Plagues*, and of long continuance. We that in former Days were the *Admiration*, if not the *Envy*, of our Neighbours for the *Happiness* we enjoyed, became not long ago, an *Astonishment*, a *Proverb*, and a *By-word*, by reason of the many, very many and sore *Calamities*, which fell upon us. Who hath forgotten the bloody and tedious *VVar*, wherein we were embroiled? when the *Land* trembled, and our *Carcases* were torn in the *Streets*? How dreadful is the remembrance of the slaughter of such multitudes of brave men, by the *Hand* of their Neighbours? the dethroning, nay beheading of the best of *Kings*? the extirpation of *Monarchy*? the abolishing

lishing of the Apostolical Episcopacy? the defacing of Holy Places; with all the rest of the Miserable Desolations, which were wrought by our own foolish hands? And yet, *for all this his Anger*, it is apparent, *was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.*

For after His Majesties most happy Restauration, how soon were two Branches of the Royal Family lopped off? What Floods were there in most parts of the Realm, by immoderate Rains; which threatned a general scarcity of provisions, and were a kind of preface, of the deluge of calamities which were coming to sweep us away? (It was the year after His Majesties return to his Kingdom; and there was a general Fast, I very well remember, appointed merely for that reason :) *And yet, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.*

For, not long after we were engaged in a new War; and that was accompanied with the greatest Pestilence that hath been known in this Nation. And yet, *for all this, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.*

For, the next year followed a most dreadful Fire; which consumed the Houses, as the former Judgment had done the Inhabitants, of our Capital City. And yet, *for all this, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still.*

For, not long after, part of the Royal Navy, the Walls and Bullwarks of this Kingdom, were burnt in an ignominious and disgraceful manner. And yet, *for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.* Our Plagues are of longer continuance; another War being commenced,

attended with a great number of ill successes : as if the Lord should say ; I have not yet done with you, though all this evil be come upon you.

Why? what can be worse than all this? when we may say with the Prophet concerning his People, *Isa. 1. 6. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness, in the body of this Realm, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores : they have not been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with Oyntment.* It is a great mistake to interpret this, as Men commonly do, concerning their sins : it is plain by what goes before, and follows after, that he describes the grievousness of their punishments ; which were so many, and so great, that the body of the Kingdom was just like the body of a Man, who hath been beaten so long that you cannot find one part whole, where there is not a bruise, or a wound, or a putrifying sore ; and those strokes so continued, that there was no time to close one wound, before another was made.

What a mortifying Spectacle is this? That is, in what a lamentable condition is this poor Nation, whose very Picture this seems to be? what can we expect but a total dissolution of a body so wounded and putrified ; for which we can find yet no Plaster, no healing? what can we expect, but that we should fall wonderfully (as *Jeremiah* speaks) our Plagues having been so wonderful?

For now at last, which seems to me the most wonderful thing that hath been mentioned, we are threatned with the danger of losing our Religion ; than which nothing ought to be dearer to us. I should not have presumed to say it, if His Majesty had

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had not told us so, in his Proclamation for the last general Fast before this, *Feb. 4. 1673.* where we are invited to the same Duty we are now about, because *the restless practises of the Romish Recusants* (whose numbers and insolencies His Majesty there declares, are lately increased) *threaten a Subversion both of Church and State.* So the words are in that Proclamation; without whose Authority, my small acquaintance with the state of affairs would have forbidden me to frighten you with so dismal a Calamity: which all considerate Persons cannot chuse but look upon as the most fearful Plague that hath yet befallen us. It puts me in mind of the swarms of Locusts which covered the Face of the Earth, and filled the Houses of *Pharoah* and the Houses of his Servants, and the Houses of all the *Egyptians*, (*Exod. 10. 5, 6.*) which immediately preceded the Plague of thick and palpable darkness which overspread the whole Country. And it may justly be thought a prodigious thing, that we should be so sleepy, so stupid, or so negligent and indifferent, as to suffer those Romish Sorcerers to come so freely to bewitch us again with their Inchantments.

Are we become so sottish, as to believe the Bishop of *Rome* ought to have any Authority in this Kingdom? There are no stripes severe enough for such Fools backs. VVhat? in this Age of Light and Learning? and in this Kingdom, where his Instruments have been so often convicted and stigmatized for Cheats and Cozeners? Are these Romish Factors come again in a confident and open manner to play their tricks, and to put off their pitiful VVares among us; as if we were blind *Indians*,

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that will take their painted Glass and Bugles, for some great Jewels and Precious Stones? I cannot but say again, that this exceeds all wonder. It amazes my thoughts; and I cannot tell what to call the blindness wherewith we are struck, if we let our selves be deceived by them.

Beloved; the Usurpations of the Pope have been so visibly exposed to all Mens view in these later times; it hath been so manifestly proved that he hath been the greatest disturber of the Christian VVorld by his incroachments; and the Maxims of the Jesuites, who are the chief sticklers for him, are so apparently horrid, and destructive to all Government, nay and good Manners; and their pretences that the Church of *Rome* is the sole Catholick Apostolick Church, have been proved to be so frivolous, or rather ridiculous; that our Divines in the Reign of the last King, of blessed Memory, thought their Pranks to be discovered so plainly to the Eyes of all the People, and all their frauds and fooleries so fully detected, that they would not venture to appear here again with their Impostures and holy Trumperies; but rather go and play their Parts upon the Stages of *Japan* and *Mexico* among their new silly Converts, and not here in this Kingdom, where an Ass is easily known from a Lion.

I find these very words in an Epistle to the Keeper of the Great Seal in those dayes. And yet, it seems, they are as busie here as ever; or rather more active: and they brag and vapour, we are told, in some places, as if we were all ready to submit to them, by a blind obedience; and were but

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as so many unclean Beasts, that will swallow all their Morfels without chewing.

O God! what Spirit of slumber is this, that is fall'n upon us? VVhat a Mist have they cast before our Eyes, that we cannot discern between things which so vastly differ? but are become such tame and easie Fools, that they hope, it seems, to impose upon us that heavy Yoke, which our Fathers threw off, with so much reason and Christian resolution. This looks like a kind of fatal stupidity; that we so far follow the old *Israelites*, as to imitate them in their first provocation, by entertaining so much as a thought of returning back again into *Egypt*.

VVhat shall we assign to be the cause of all these Divine Judgments; and that there is so little hope to see any conclusion of them? But after all this is come upon us, his anger is not yet turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, and shakes such a Rod over us, that all the former are no more to be compared with it, than the VVhip of *Solomon*, to the Scorpions wherewith the *Israelites* were threatned to be chastised by *Rehoboam*?

It can be none else, but our foul ingratitude to our most gracious God and merciful Father; and our bringing forth no better Fruit, than that Vine-yard did, which his own right hand had Planted. *we are a sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity* (as *Isaiah* complains of them, chap. 1. 4.) *a Seed of evil doers, Children that are corrupters, who are gone away backward*; which may justly provoke him to continue our punishments, and to send us such strong delusion, that we should believe a Lye; seeing we received not the truth in the love of it, but
had

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had pleasure in unrighteousness. There are few, if any, of those sins, against every one of which you heard a most terrible VVo denounced, that are not to be found among us; and if we will not forsake them, no not when God hath begun to strike, as well as threaten, he may in his righteous judgment, after all his Plagues on our bodies and goods, inflict the greatest of all upon our minds, and strike such obstinate Sinners with an incurable blindness.

V.

Now what signs are there, that we see, of our repentance and turning from those evil wayes; in which we have proceeded to such an height of provocation? what do we do, to prevent those judgments, which we say we fear? VVhat effectual course do we take, to avert such an utter destruction, as the *Israelites* brought upon themselves by their continued wickedness? You have seen in too many things, how little difference there is between us, and that People. The Lord their God, I have shown you, cast them into a most excellent Order and admirable Form of Government and Religion; in which we have been praised by the Nations round about us. Many wonderful deliverances He granted them, from those that hated them; wherein He hath not been wanting to us neither. And all the Bible shows how ungrateful they proved to him; as all the VVorld knows, and Posterity I believe, will be astonished at it, how wickedly we have behaved our selves since He hath done the most marvellous things for us. And therefore He hath made us, you have now heard, as like in our punishments, as we have made our selves like them, in our sins.

And

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And, for any thing yet appears, to complete the parallel, we are like to imitate them in their impenitence and hardness of Heart, notwithstanding all Gods Judgments upon them : And so at last to fall under that heavy sentence which the Prophet pronounces in the next Chapter, against such a cross-grain'd and gainsaying people.

Read it, and be seriously affraid lest it should be our portion. *Isa. 6. 10, 11, 12. Make the heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, until the Cities be wasted without Inhabitant, and the Houses without Man, and the Land be utterly desolate; and the Lord have removed Men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the Land. O dreadful doom! VVhat means do we use, that none like it may pass upon us? wherein do we difference our selves from that rebellious Generation? what tokens are there, that we intend to become more obedient to the Voice of the Lord our God; and to meet him in the way of his Judgments, by a timely repentance?*

We talk indeed often of repenting, and acknowledge that we shall perish, unless we repent : but still every Man goes on in the way of his wicked heart, and doth not at all repent of the evil of his doings. After all the Plagues, the great Plagues; and of long continuance, which God hath sent upon us; and after all our Fastings and Humiliations, and Confessions that we are a wicked people who justly deserve sorer Judgments; we continue still the very
same

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same that we were ; unless this render us still more wicked and justly obnoxious to his severer displeasure, that we will not amend those things which we our selves confess are so provoking to his Divine Majesty and so destructive to us.

We are met this day to confess we are very great Sinners ; and to beseech God to bless our Dread Sovereign and his Kingdoms, and to avert his Judgments from us , which our provocations deserve: But how do we hope they should be averted ? meerly by our sorrowful Confessions, and Prayers, and Supplications for Mercy ? They rather accuse us as obstinate Offenders and may hasten his Judgments, if we do not what in us lyes to amend those faults, which we say we are sensible will bring them upon us. Why then do we not seriously set upon this necessary, this saving work of thorow amendment, and reformation of our lives ? Gods Anger we pretend to believe, is not yet quite turned away, but his Hand we fear is stretched out to give us another stroke : And the cause is visible ; no body denies, that the reason is, because we do not repent. Why then do we not heartily ingage in that long neglected duty of repentance, which we know will do the business, and save us all this trouble, sadness, sorrow ; and more blows which we may be sure are prepared, for the back of such Fools, as wilfully refuse to go in the only way, which they see leads unto their Peace and Happiness ? Let me ask a few more questions.

I.

Are we indeed so foolish as to think, that God will be thus angry with us for nothing ? that He can send one Plague after another, and make a miserable
De-

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Deſtruction and ſpoil among the beſt of his Creatures here on Earth ; when there is no cauſe for it, but meerly to ſatisfy his own Will ? Doth He delight in the death of Sinners, or willingly grieve the Children of Men ? Is it any contentment to him, to ſee us kill one another ? to behold our Carcaſes fall by the peſtilence ? to rot and corrupt the Fruits of the Earth, which He hath made it naturally to produce ? Doth He love to turn a pleaſant Garden into a Wilderneſs ? or to vex thoſe whom He hath made capable of ſo much pleaſure, with any other Miſchiefs and Calamities ? We are all better inſtructed ſure, than to harbour any ſuch Opinion of the Juſt and Gracious Lord of all ; ſince no good Man can take any delight in the meer Miſeries, Cryes, and woful Lamentations of the moſt inferiour Creatures.

II.

What then do we think of our Condition ? Doth Gods Anger exceed the cauſe, though there be ſome reaſon for it ? Is it diſproportionable to the provocation ? And do we fancy him more diſpleaſed than he need ? If we think his Juſtice and Goodneſs are ſo great, that they will not ſuffer, that He ſhould ſmite when there is no offence ; we may be as confident they will forbid, that the ſtroke ſhould be above what the offence deſerves. He never ſends heavy Punishments for light Crimes ; nor Common General Judgments for ſome Private Offences : But as Men ſin, ſo they ſuffer. When a great Calamity overſpreads a Nation, it is, we may be ſure, for a great and contagious Iniquity. And when thoſe Plagues are of long continuance, as *Moses* ſpeaks, it is becauſe that Nation goes on ſtill in its Treaſpaſſes.

E

III. But

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III.

But though in those days the Prophet said, *Our God shall wound the Head of his Enemies; and the Hairy Scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his Trespases* (Psal. 68. 21.) yet now perhaps you think there is no such danger; and that all these are but fanciful Applications, which we make, when, from Gods proceedings against his ancient people, we put you in fear of further severity, which you may expect, if you do not repent of your evil doings. Doth this Imagination rise in your minds, to obstruct the passage of these Truths to your hearts? Read then I beseech you, and attend to the *Second Lesson* appointed for Evening Prayer, this Day: and there the Apostle will teach you another Lesson. *1 Cor. 10. 6. Now these things* (speaking of what befel the *Israelites*) *were our Examples; to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.* Nor be Idolaters, nor commit Fornication, nor tempt Christ, nor murmur, as (in the following Verses) he shews they did to their cost, and then concludes as he began, *V. 11. Now all these things hapned to them for Types: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

Why then do we not, without any delay, repent and turn to God? since it is so apparent, both that we are Offenders, great Offenders, in an high and insolent manner; and that all those woes (which I have so often mentioned) in the Prophet *Isaiah* are a warning to us, to beware of these Sins, or presently to renounce and forsake them all, when their danger is discovered to us; especially when we have suffered already so sadly for them, and felt such heavy strokes
of

In a Sermon at the last Fast. 27

of God's Revenging Hand ; which is not yet with drawn, but seems to be stretched out still. Why I say, are we so senseless, so Fool-hardy, so desperate as still to live in all those wickednesses, which are so hateful to God ; though one Judgment have come tumbling upon another , and still there are more behind ? *For his Anger is not turned away* (let me repeat it, as the Prophet doth four or five times) *but his Hand is stretched out still.*

To resolve this question, it will require a new Sermon, though no great pains to compose it. For I see the Reasons (I think) of our impenitence as plainly, as if they were written with the Finger of God upon the Walls of your Church, as legibly as you read many Texts of Scripture there. And I am confident, one is (which is all I shall now mention) that there are great numbers of Offenders, who are not at all sensible, that it is the Hand of God which hath been stretched out against us, in so many Plagues ; but impute all to ill Fortune and blind Chance, which hath fallen unluckily upon us. This was one of the things that helpt to undo the House of *Israel* and *Judah*, as you have heard (*V. 12. of this Chapter*) *they regarded not the work of the Lord, nor considered the operation of his Hands.* And it will inevitably ruine all those who walk on the same tract. For how should such Men repent, when *God is not in all their thoughts*, and they will acknowledge no Divine Hand in any of our Calamities, but stick meerly in lower Causes ; above which they are resolved not to look ?

If any of you be in the least infected with this dull Atheism, endeavour to cure that in the first place ;

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th at a sense of God awakened in your mind may cure all the rest of your Diseases, and move you to stand in fear of him, and of his judgments. You cannot but be afraid, I am sure, if you see, and be sensible of the Hand of God in all that we have suffered. It will make you say as the Jaylor did, when he came in trembling before the Apostles, *what shall we do to be saved?*

What? but repent of this, that you have no more laid to heart the works of God, or so soon forgot the operation of his hands. Which I beseech you now seriously consider and ponder, and keep in mind; that you may be afraid to offend him any more, by going on still in those trespasses, for which you have been so sharply handled, and are in danger to be punished with far greater severity. If you do but mind how God hath proceeded in the method of his judgments against us, till they are risen to high and dreadful degrees, you cannot but be awakened to think how dismal the next stroke is like to be; and so *consider, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.*

I need not, if I were able, to set every one of your particular sins, who are here present, before your Eyes: for God hath done it by his judgments, if they have at all awakened your drowsie Consciences. They have called upon you to examine, and search, and try your wayes; which if you have done, you soon found what was amiss. There is none here, I verily believe, that hath lost that discerning faculty, which distinguishes between good and evil. You very well know the one from the other; and are not grown so stupid, as to put light for darkness, and darkness for light. If you would
but

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but make as exact a difference in your Lives and Actions, as you are able to do in your Minds and Notions, all would be well with *you*; whatsoever becomes of those who are past feeling, and therefore commit all iniquity with greediness.

As for such senseless Souls I know not well what to say of them, but must acknowledge it to be a very discouraging thought, when I consider that they who are most concerned in what I have said in this Sermon, are neither here, nor (it is to be feared) in any other place of Gods Worship and Service. They to whom the Character, which the Prophet gives of a People in a woful condition, most of all belongs, never so much as read it; nor will come to receive our Admonitions, nor think of humbling themselves before God; no not when they are required and strictly charged by his Majesty so to do, as they tender Gods honour, and would avoid his just wrath and indignation against this Land. They make no more of the Kings Proclamation (how should it be expected) than they do of Gods holy Word: but are, perhaps, at this very time feasting and making merry, when we are fasting and testifying our sorrow for our sins. These are the most forlorn Wretches of all others: a great part of the Plague of the Country where they live. We do well to separate our selves from the Herd of such Brutes, as have no fear, no apprehension of any thing that is future. You are to be commended for addressing your selves to God in this place; and I hope, when you go from hence, you will continue to apply your selves to him, in the most humble and earnest deprecations of his displeasure; resolving
that

that you, for your part, will have no farther hand in provoking the Lord to anger against these Kingdoms; but endeavour rather to live the more strictly, because there are so many loose-livers, of whose amendment there is little or no hope remaining.

And here it will be necessary to give you a caution; which it is easie to observe, but is not well followed. As the greatest provokers of God to anger, will never, I doubt, think of atoning him: So they who have most power to reduce them to some sense of their duty, will not, perhaps, imploy it sufficiently, for the correction of them, and all other bold offenders. The Magistrates, I mean, in their several places, notwithstanding the Laws for that purpose, will neglect, perhaps, by their execution, to give a check to open prophaneſs, and insolent wickedness. The neglecters, or contemnors, of so religious and necessary a duty, as that of this day, may escape the punishment which his Majesty puts them in fear of in his Proclamation. And they who come to seduce the People from the established Religion, may meet with no controule; though his Majesty, and great Counsel, have declared, that their practises threaten the subversion of Church and State. Many more such enormities may be supposed; and should it so fall out, as I have put the case; yet we must take great care of this plain Truth, which every body hath at their tongues-end, but few Men live by, That we neglect not our duty, because others mind not theirs.

This is a very common and grievous sin, which we are all to resolve this day shall be amended. We are ever finding fault with others, more than our selves.

Some

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Some are still laying the blame upon the Court, that things are no better; others throw all the Dirt they can upon the Bishops: there are sober People, who have got an evil custome of making complaints, on all occasions, of the Fathers of the Church; and others cry out as loudly against the negligence of all the Officers of Justice: But in the mean time, do nothing themselves, but what they should not do, to remedy all that is amiss.

Is this the way, think you, to avert Gods Judgments? to be continually arraigning the Vices of others, of which we have no knowledge; nay, judging at all adventures, those who are our Superiours, and in the mean time letting our own apparent sins escape without correction? Doth this look like the way of God, in which we hope to meet with his blessing? or are these rash censures which we carelessly throw out, likely to redress any disorders? Or can we find so little work at home, that we know not where to busie our selves, but in other Mens concerns? Why do you suffer your selves to be thus grossly abused by the Devil, whose Art it is to divert you from that wherein you may do some good, by imploying you there where you have nothing to do; or if you had, have no power to make any amendment?

Grant, if it may be done without offence, that what you surmise is true; that there are faults in those, whom out of respect to their high Office we would willingly excuse: and which is more, that they will still be in fault, and not do their duty as they ought (though I hope in God, they will not be truly charged with this guilt:) What then? Doth
this

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this authorize your irreverent speeches of them? Are they like to do better, by your talking against them? Or doth it tend to any thing, but the disgracing those whose honour you should preserve, and the bringing all things into greater confusion?

Come, come, if you design any good to your selves, or this Kingdom; set your selves to work in that place, where you have power to make things better. If you mean really to do what in you lies, to turn away Gods anger from us; turn then your zeal (if you have any) that way, where it may be profitably imployed, and work some amendment. There is something I am sure which every one of us may do, (and if we do not, shall be reproached out of our own Mouths, which are so censorious of other Folks negligence) to procure a blessing upon our Sovereign and his Kingdoms. In that let us imploy our most serious endeavours; and consider impartially, are there not a number of things out of order at home? Do you not hear them calling upon your care and diligence to see them amended? Spend your zeal then first of all in that place, and let it be your business this day, when you are alone by your selves; as to bewail, between God and your own Souls, all the wickedness you know of abroad, to lament the neglects of those who you see do not execute the Laws, to sigh in secret for the faults of those, which you ought not openly to discourse of: So to descend into your own breasts and make a search there, what duty towards God or Man there is, which you neglect; and what commands there are, which you break. And when you have found them, set them before your Eyes in all their foul Circumstances;

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cumstances; most sorrowfully bewail them; express your abhorrence of them; and faithfully resolve to reform all your negligence and remissness, as well as your open disobedience.

In this search, and examination, you must be strict and exact; and when you have sifted your selves narrowly, and resolved to amend all there, the next thing you have to do, is to amend all those over whom you have any power, and who are committed to your charge. Your Children, I mean, and Servants, whom you ought to call upon to be more careful in their performance of the duties which they omit, and to break off those sins into which you see them run: resolving, with *Joshua*, that whatsoever others do, *You and your House will serve the Lord.*

And next of all we ought to express our detestation, as much as we are able, of those leud courses which we cannot reform. What hinders, for instance, but you may frown and show your dislike, when you hear a Gentleman, or one that is much your superiour, rap out Oaths, and Blasphemies, at every word, in his common discourse? Is this any incivility or rudeness to him, in his House or in your own? And what can detain you, if you have a love to God, from going to do your duty to him; when others are resolved to omit it? Why should you not leave any company, when you are called to Church? and not be so complemental, as to stay at home with those who have no regard to the Divine Service; and for fear of disobliging them, be guilty of an open neglect of Almighty God?

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Nay, may not every one of you do very much for the preservation of the true Religion; which Gods own right hand hath planted and established among us? By studying, that is more seriously, the grounds of it; by informing your selves what indeed, and none else, is the true ancient Catholick Apostolick Faith, which is so much talkt of; and especially by endeavouring after an holy Conversation answerable thereunto. Cannot you be careful to principle your Children with all the diligence you can use, in the Religion here professed; nay, and your Servants too, and all that are under your charge? what hinders you from bringing them constantly to Church along with you; and to see they stay there, and wander not to other places? And why cannot you examine them, what they have learnt? and remember them of that which was most remarkable; and read in the Evening of the Lords-Day, some good Book to them, that may instruct them in their Duty; and make them understand the difference between our Religion, and all that oppose it?

These are proper things for you, in which to express your zealous desires of bringing things to a better pass. And do not think to throw off the guilt from your selves, unless you set your hearts to do something of this nature: nor imagine that it is none of your fault, that we are in so ill a condition, and in danger of a worse; for if the thing be well scanned, there is never a one of us but is less or more to be charged with it. And, to speak a little more particularly, I doubt our Religion suffers exceedingly

In a Sermon at the last Fast. 35

ly by this ; that we do no more value it, nor thank God for it ; nor stir up our selves to serve God with fervent spirits in it. For if we did more esteem the *knowledge of God our Saviour*, and really look upon it as *Eternal Life*, and think *his service the most perfect freedom* (as we pretend to do in our daily Prayers) we need not *fear the power of any Adversaries* ; but be confident God would hear our Prayers, when we say, *From our Enemies defend us, O Christ*. But alas ! we are negligent and careless hearers and readers of his holy Word, and too many talk all the time the Chapters are read : as if that were not one end of our daily Assemblies, *to hear Gods most holy word* ; as well as *to pray, and to set forth his most worthy praise, and thank him for his benefits*. Nay, all these, God knows, are but slightly performed : We see People talk out all the Hymns ; and it is well if they can forbear whispering to one another while they pretend to be at their Prayers. A most dreadful prophanation ! which must be amended, if we hope for any mercy. For God will not be moved by our constant show of Religion and Devotion, if we want the truth and sincerity of it : and how are we religious, how dwelleth the love of God in us, when we mind no more what we do in religious Offices ?

Let me beseech you again to reform these things thorowly ; and instead of accusing others of their carelessness and negligence, gird up the Loins of your own minds, and go about that effectually, which you know you ought to do, and which you can do, by Gods assistance, for the healing of those

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Wounds, which are not yet closed, in the Body of this Church and Kingdom.

It is not too late, I hope; nay, I am sure it is not; if we be in good earnest. For, *the Lord*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* speaks, *is in the midst of us, and we are yet called by his Name*; and if we will return to him with all our heart, and with all our soul, He will not leave us. So *Moses* declared to the Children of *Israel*, long before all those evils befell them, which I have related. *If when all these things are come upon thee, the Blessing and the Curse, which I set before thee (Deut. 30. 1, 2, &c.) thou shalt call to mind, and return to the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his Voice in all that I command thee, thou and thy Children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul: Then the Lord thy God will turn thy Captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from among the Nations whither he hath scattered thee: and the Lord thy God (V. 7.) will put all these Curses upon thine Enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.*

We need not doubt but the same gracious Lord will do the very same for us, when we, in the vexation of our spirits, and the anguish of our souls, cry unto him; if we also turn unto him with all our heart, and with all our soul. Let us but thus reform our selves, and others, as far as our Power extends; and we may comfortably hope that our Prayers this Day, will become prevalent for all the Nation. Such Supplicants may do much, to the turning away Gods wrath from us; or to the obtaining

In a Sermon at the last Fast. 37

taining a forbearance, that it may not come in our dayes; or, if it do, that it may be (as it is admirably expressed in the Prayer after Sermon) effectual to our Correction, and not to our Destruction.

And if the Reformation of our Lives were any thing General throughout the Kingdom, I perswade my self, it might quite avert Gods Judgments; notwithstanding the great and desperate Provokers which will still remain among us. They might only bear their own Burden; but He might graciously spare the Kingdom, for the sake of those many pious Supplicants that are in it. Though we stand so guilty before him, *that for our evil deeds, we do worthily deserve to be punished*; yet He might hear the earnest cryes of such Penitents, which sue unto him, *that by the comfort of His grace we may be mercifully relieved*. He might have a regard to our constant *Litanies*, or Supplications, that He would *mercifully look upon our Infirmities*; (or afflictions) *and for the glory of his Name, turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved*: Or if such a Blessing could not be obtained, those devout Souls would still be able, *in all their troubles, to put their whole trust and confidence in his mercy*; and rejoyce, in the midst of tribulations, in hope of his glory. To which God of his infinite mercy bring us, by such wayes, and in such Methods, as He sees best: And let us never cease to pray to him, according to the daily Collect for this Week, with which I conclude.

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Almighty God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of Righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their Profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

FINIS.

